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EXAMINATION

OF THE

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PRETENTIONS made by the *separating Brethren*, to any REMAINING Title or Right to the present actual *Excercise* of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Wherein the Groundlessness and Vanity of these Pretentions are detected.

BEING

AN APPENDIX to the VINDICATION of the *Proceedings* of the *Associate Synod*, met at *Edinburgh*, April 10. 1747.

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Exod. xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain.*

Jer. ii. 19. *Thy Backslidings shall reprove thee.*

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Advertisement.

THE following Examination having been prepared, for being published along with the late Vindication of the Proceedings of the Associate Synod; it was then laid aside, in view of the Subject which it handles, coming to be more largely considered in the Detection then advertised: But, as the finishing of that Detection, through various Incidents, has not been hitherto overtaken; it is thought necessary that the following Examination be in the mean Time published, without further Delay.





A N

EXAMINATION, &c.

THE *Separating Brethren* are so far from relenting, that they are evidently proceeding in their Defection with an high Hand. It has been proved, in the *Vindication* of the Synod's Proceedings, that they have, by their sinful and arbitrary Conduct, divested themselves of their *Ministerial* Powers, as to any *present actual* Exercise of them; and that they have brought this about, by assuming to themselves Powers of *their own*, noway derived from Christ the alone Fountain of all Church-Power; which is manifest from this one Consideration, that they have employ'd these Powers *against* Christ, and for *burying* his Cause and Testimony, as stated in this Day of Backsliding and Defection from Reformation formerly attained unto. But they are going on in their assuming Way: And seeing, as has been made good, that they have *dropt* the Cause of Christ, which is inviolably connected with the Honour and Glory of his Name; the Scandal and Offence they have given must be exceeding great, in the sinful, bold and audacious Step they have taken, of pretending to *constitute* in his Name whole Cause they have *betrayed*; and thus, in their late pretended *Act*, *profaning* his sacred Name, to

patronize their Defection, and to screen their own Name from that Infamy they have themselves brought upon it. In animadverting a little upon this their Paper, dated at *Stirling, October 29th, 1747*, I shall only make a Remark or two upon their *Introduction*; and then proceed to examine the *Reasons* which they pretend to advance against the Validity and Warrantableness of the Meeting of the *Associate Synod at Edinburgh, April 10th, 1747*. As to the *Introduction*, I shall only remark these few Things following.

In the *first* Place, they think fit to represent the Members of the Synod, who endeavoured to maintain the Cause of Truth, as if they had *separated* from the Synod. But they forgot, it seems, that which I had formerly proved, that they themselves withdrew, and *separated* themselves, from the Cause of Christ as among the Hands of the Synod: And there being an inseparable Connection betwixt the Cause of Christ, and the Synod constitute in the Name of Christ, for the Defence and Maintenance of his Cause, they have thus *separated* themselves from the Synod; and can not possibly have a present actual Right to any Place in the Synod, but to stand at the Bar to answer for their offensive Conduct and Behaviour. And every one who is acquainted with the Cause of Truth as stated at present, will easily observe and be convinced, that their extravagant Proceedings at *Stirling, October 29th*, joined with their former Conduct, doth make it absolutely necessary that the Synod proceed to *censure* against them without further Delay, if they do not use the proper Means to prevent the same being inflicted upon them.

Secondly, They next pretend that the Synod's Quarrel

Quarrel against them is *groundless*: But I have proved, in the *Vindication*, that it is well founded, and I refer to the Proof there given.

Thirdly, They pretend the Synod has changed their former *Holding*: But the Synod have endeavoured, as I have proved, to hold fast the whole Cause of Truth, as stated at this Day of Defection; and the *Constitution* of the Synod includes in it no more but the Cause of Christ, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, and laid down in our approved Standards, and with an explicate Declaration of the Court's holding of Christ as alone King and Head of his Church, by solemnly fencing and constituting the Court in his Name with Prayer, and thus putting his Cause, and his Court, and the duly called Members thereof as Instruments, into his Hand, who sits and rules upon the Throne of *David* for ever and ever. It is evident, from former Papers written upon this Subject, that the whole of the *Cause of Truth*, as presently stated, was held fast and maintained by the *Synod*, met *April 10th 1747*; and that they declared their holding of Christ the alone King and Head of his Church, is manifest from their constituting with Prayer in his Name. And since they hold fast his whole *Cause*, it is plain they neither did nor could change their *Holding*, in thus constituting; for Christ's *Cause*, and the *Holding* of him for its Defence, are inseparable. But the separating Brethren must answer for their sinful Presumption, in betraying and giving up with the Cause of Christ, and yet adventuring to constitute in his Name, to patronize and cloak their own Defection. Thus they have taken it upon them to separate the Cause of Christ from the Holding in his Name for its Defence, which may give great Grief of

of Heart to all who love his blessed Name. But tho' the separating Brethren thrust themselves out of the Synod by the sinful Part they acted, yet the Synod was still the *same*, and their *Holding* the *same* as formerly.

Fourthly, They pretend that it was a new Constitution: But I have already sufficiently exposed the Vanity of this Fiction of theirs, in the *Vindication*; and from what I have just now said, it is very manifest, that the *same Truths* are held and maintained by the Associate Synod as formerly, and that the *Holding* is the *same*, and is not changed any Manner of Way from what it was formerly; so that they only impose upon credulous ignorant People, when they talk of a *new* Constitution of the Synod. The melancholy *Rupture*, which occurred in holy Providence, has, by the Occasion of the awful Part acted by the separating Brethren, made a Change upon *their* Circumstances, they having brought themselves into a *new* and most *dismal* Situation; but otherwise there is nothing *new* as to the Synod, the *Cause* is the *same*, and the *Constitution* the *same* before and after the *Rupture*. All the Members of Synod, I have Reason to believe, are very sorry for the melancholy Condition the separating Brethren have brought themselves unto; but every considering Person will be persuaded, as well as they, that it is a most extravagant Fancy to pretend that any Thing is made *new* in the Synod, as to its Constitution, because *some* Brethren have deserted the Cause, they formerly professed together with the Synod, and thus have excluded themselves from a Seat in the Synod, till the Scandal and Offence they have given be purged. This, and nothing *else*, and nothing *more*, is what is new in the Synod: And I would

rejoice, and endeavour, as enabled, to be thankful to the Lord, to see this, which is both *new, humbling* and justly *afflicting* to the Children of Zion, happily removed by a gracious divine Interposition, to the Praise of his Name; but whatever our Wishes are, we must be resigned to the divine Will, believing, that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

I shall add nothing further, as to their *Introduction*, except to acknowledge, that it is above my Comprehension to understand, upon what Account the separating Brethren compare themselves to the *General Assembly 1638*. I can for my Part find no Resemblance in this Comparison, nor can any Thing be made of it, except it be traced by the Rule of Contraries; namely, that as the *General Assembly 1638* are *famous for Reformation*, so the separating Brethren have taken, and are absurdly pushing on a Course, which, in the Nature of the Thing, must render them *infamous* for an Attempt at *Deformation*: And as the *General Assembly 1638*, used their Endeavours for *stopping Deformation*, by condemning the five Articles of *Perth*, and other Steps of Defection; so they are assiduous in putting a *Stop* to the Progress of some Beginnings of *Reformation*, in the Renewing of our Covenants: And as the *Assembly 1638*, were employed in *explaining* our *National Covenant*, that so when sworn it might be understood to *adopt* all attained to Reformation, and renounce the Corruptions introduced into the Church; so the separating Brethren have been strenuously contending for what is, upon the Matter, an *Abjuration* of the whole Cause and Testimony, as it is presently stated, and is among the Hands of the witnessing Synod, in a Way of Covenanting.

I now

I now proceed, by divine Assistance, to examine the *Reasons* they pretend to advance against the *Validity* and *Warrantableness* of the Meeting of the *Associate Synod*, at *Edinburgh*, *April 10th 1747*.

They have endeavoured to make up the Defect of Reasoning and Force of Argument, by the Number of their *Reasons*: And seeing the round Number *Twelve* has been agreeable to their Fancy; I shall endeavour to keep by the same Number in the *Replies* and *Answers*, for the Satisfaction of such as may be in any Danger, through Mistake, to be ensnared by them.

And, as to their *first Reason*, that the Meeting of Synod, *April 10th*, was not indicted by Mr. James Mair Moderator: I must tell them, that as it has been already shown, that there was no new Holding nor new Constitution of the Synod, *April 10th*; so they may know, there was not so much as any new Meeting of the Synod, different from the Meeting of the Synod *April 8th*, but only an Adjournment of the same Meeting of Synod to another Sederunt, from *April 9th* in the Evening, where the separating Brethren did unhinge the Constitution as to themselves only,---by pushing, voting and pretending to carry the *second Resolution*, by which they attempted to bury the whole Cause as among the Hands of the witnessing Synod, and by which they succeeded in nothing else, but in throwing themselves out of the Synod, and in burying their own Ministerial Powers as to any present actual Exercise of them: I say, it was only an Adjournment of the same Meeting of Synod from *April 9th*, in the Evening, to another Sederunt, *April 10th*, at Ten of the Clock before Noon.

The separating Brethren might have known this from

from Mr. *Thomas Mair's* PROTEST: In which he doth *declare* and *protest*, That the *Members* of Synod, who had been contending against the Torrent of Defection, ought, in Duty to the Lord and his Heritage, to *take up* and *Exercise* the Authority and Power of the *Associate Synod*, lawfully and fully devolved upon them;---and for this End, to meet *To-morrow* at Ten of the Clock in Mr. *Gib's* House, that they might regularly enter upon and *proceed in the Business* of the Synod: And they know themselves, as well as many Witnesses present, that all, who were attending upon the Synod for Business, were, by Word of Mouth, called to attend the Synod at said *Sederunt*. They likewise may know, That the Synod, before they parted, did *proceed* in some of the *ordinary Business* of the Synod, particularly in appointing Missions to *London* and *Ireland*: And I suppose every Man may be convinced, at first Sight, that a Meeting intimated to be held the *ensuing Day*, in order to *proceed in the Business of the Synod* before them at their present Meeting, is not a *new Meeting* of the Synod, but *another Sederunt* of the same Meeting of the Synod.

It has been shown formerly, That the separating Brethren, by their arbitrary Procedure, and particularly in voting their *second Resolution*, buried, so far as they could, the whole Cause and Testimony, and that in this attempt they effectually buried their own Ministerial Powers, as to any present actual Exercise of them. It was therefore necessary that the Cause should be *maintained* and *supported*; the which was endeavoured by a *regular* contending against the Torrent of Defection, and in the proper Time taking up, for that End, that Authority and Power of the *Associate Synod*, which the separating Brethren had divested themselves of. Wherefore

any Member of the Synod, concurred with by the other Members jointly witnessing with him against this Torrent of Defection, might warrantably, by *Protestation* in their Name, *take hold of* and maintain the *Cause* of Christ thus *given up* with, and along with the *Cause* keep hold of the *Constitution* and holding of the Synod, which the separating Brethren were *laying aside* all at once, as has been proved here, and in the *Vindication* of the Synod's Procedure. And it being only an *Adjournment* of the Synod to a *Sederunt* next Day, tho' not in the *ordinary* Way, as the Case was *extraordinary*, but by a solemn *Protestation* of these Members of Synod who were adhering to the Cause of Truth : It is no Way to the Purpose, whether the Protestation was entered by the *Moderator*, or any Brother with Concurrence of other Members of Synod, who were beholding with Astonishment the Conduct of the separating Brethren, and others joining with them, who were then the prevailing Party.

As to their 2d *Reason*, that the Meeting *April* 10th, was indicted to meet within a *few Hours* thereafter : The Reply to their *first Reason* is a sufficient Answer to this ; in as much as it is ordinary to intimate a *subsequent Sederunt* of Synod, a *few Hours* after the present.

As to their 3d *Reason*, namely, That the Synod was *already lawfully constituted* ; It is not said that the Synod was *not* lawfully constitute, even upon the 9th Day of *April*, until the reading of the *second Protestation*, wherein it was protested, That *that* Meeting was not, nor ought, to be held and reputed a *due* and *lawfully constitute* Meeting of the *associate Synod* in THAT STEP : And what was understood by *that Step*, is very obvious from the *Protestation* itself, at first reading of it.

It may be very evident to every thinking Man, that when the separating Brethren proceeded to the *Step* of the *second Resolution*, and voted an *Allowance* to swear an *Oath contradictory* to the *Bond* for renewing our Covenants, and an *Oath homologating* all the publick Defections and Corruptions of the Day, *testified against* in the Act and Testimony upon which the Associate Synod did constitute; and when they did all this in such a *disorderly* Way as hath been formerly explained; they did thereby *overturn* the Constitution of the Synod, so far as in them lay, and turned themselves out from a Seat in the Synod, by giving up with the Testimony upon which the Synod did constitute: And that the prevailing Party in *that Step* were not a *duly constitute* Meeting of the Associate Synod; and that therefore all the Pretensions they have made since that Step, to be acknowledged as such, are merely groundless and imaginary, is very manifest; in as much as, it is altogether in vain to pretend to any Concern or Interest in the *Constitution* of the Synod, after they have given up with the *Principles* and *Testimony* upon which the Synod at first did constitute; seeing the *Principles* and *Testimony* upon which the Synod did constitute, and the *Constitution* of the Synod, are inseparable, one from another. And however the *Moderator* of the Synod and the *Clerk, pro tempore*, were absent at the next *Sederunt* of Synod in Mr. Gib's House, they had themselves to blame; seeing, in the last *Protest* by Mr. *Thomas Mair*, it was declared, that the lawful Authority and Power of the Associate Synod must ly in a constitute Meeting, *not only* of such Members of Synod who had been contending against the Torrent of Defection, but *likewise* of such other Members of Synod who should cleave unto them, in a Way of confessing what sin-

ful Steps and Compliances they had fallen into upon that Occasion.

And it is well known, that the Absence of *Moderator* and *Clerk*, at any subsequent *Sederunt* of a Meeting of Synod, does not hinder the Synod's proceeding to Business ; but the Brother who did *moderate* before the present Moderator was chosen, does ordinarily take the Chair at the Desire of Members, and constitute the Synod in the Moderator's Absence ; which was the *Case* upon the 10th of *April*, the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Mair* having constitute the Synod at the Desire of Members : And the Synod being constitute, they continued Mr. *Mair* in the Chair ; and, according to the ordinary Method, they appointed another to officiate as *Clerk pro tempore* in the Clerk's Absence : From all which it is very evident, that the separating Brethren have said nothing to the Purpose, in what they pretend to amuse People with, as to this and other Formalities.

In their *fourth Reason*, they tell us, that *Elders* are elected by their several *Sessions*, as Commissioners to the Synod ; and that the *Elders*, with whom the Synod did constitute, *April* 10th, had no more Power from their *Constituents* to become Members of another Court, separate from the former, than Members of a *Presbyterian* Synod, have Power to turn themselves into a *Popish* or *Prelatick* one. But it has been shewn, that it was the ordinary Meeting of Synod, which met *April* 10th, and another *Sederunt* of the same Meeting which did meet *April* 8th. I hope it will not be pretended that *Sessions* elect *Elders* to every *Sederunt* of the same ordinary Meeting of Synod : And it is a midnight Dream for them to pretend to impose upon the common Reason of Mankind, as if they themselves could, possibly, in the Nature

Nature of Things, be the *ordinary Meeting* of Synod, or *any* Meeting of it whatsoever. For, as they observe upon this Head, that all the Acts and Proceedings of Synod must run in a direct Line of Subordination to the *Word of God*, otherwise they are, *ipso facto*, null and void; so I must add, for these *Ministers* and *Elders* to pretend to be constitute into a witnessing Synod for Defence and Support of the Cause of Truth, after they had, so far as in them lay, buried the Cause of Truth as among their Hands, is to act, not in a direct Line of *Subordination* to the Word, but in a direct *Contradiction* to the Word of God; and therefore their pretended Constitution is null and void in it self. There is quite other Work laid to their Hand, according to the Word, than vain Attempts to save their *own Name* and Character, by profaning the Name of God in pretended Constitutions of Courts; and that is, to humble themselves before him, for their sinful Attempt to ensnare the Consciences of the Generation with *contradictory Oaths*, and for the *Allowance* they pretended to give, in voting their *second Resolution*, for *Seceders* to renounce by Oath the *Testimony* and Cause of Truth, as stated at this Day. As for their foul and bitter Language, on this Head, charging the Synod with assuming a *lordly* and *magisterial Power*, and comparing them to a *Papists* and *Prelatick Synod*, to *Donatists* and *Brownists*; it is plain that such Language deserves no Answer; and I shall only observe that they make it evident thereby, that they have lost their Way at present; it being ordinary for Men that wander in a dark Night, and do not know where they are going, to *fret* and be *out of Temper*. I shall remark in the next Place, that as the *Sessions* had all of them declared their Adherence to the Act and *Testimony*,

so the *Elders* commissioned from them needed no *new* Instructions to *adhere* unto it: Nor could the *Sessions*, without Apostasy, tho' they had returned unto them for new Commissions, have instructed them, to adhere to the *separating Brethren*, who had betrayed the Cause of Truth, and buried the Testimony.

They pretend to argue in the Close of this Reason of theirs, as if it had been a *new* Constitution of Synod; because, say they, when the Members of Synod went home, they had a *strange Question* to put to their *Elderships*, namely, Whether they approved of their Constitution, and would sit in Session in Subordination thereto? However, the Ground of putting any Question of this Nature, was not from their being any *new Synod*, or *new Constitution*, which, as has been proved, was by no Means the Case: But it proceeded allendarly from the strange and unheard of Conduct of the separating Brethren, in using all their Art and Sophistry for a Tract of Time, to palliate the Sinfulness of that Practice in *Seceders*, who had or should enter into the *Bond* testifying against the publick Defections and Corruptions of the Day, to swear likewise the *religious Clause* of some Burgees-oaths *approving* the same: And it proceeded from their strange and absurd Conduct, in that, after they had by their *second Resolution* voted the whole Cause of Truth, as stated at this Day, *out of* the Synod, they had yet the amazing Confidence, to pretend to be the Synod. Thus their Conduct, with the Regard many of the People had to the Persons of some of them, was the Occasion of throwing a great many of the People, through different Corners, into Confusion: And it was the less strange, that many of the People were at a Loss what to think, or do, when such a strange Part was acted by Ministers of whom quite other Things were

were expected : It was therefore necessary, that the Members of the Synod should use the proper Means to keep their *Sessions* still in Adherence to the Cause of Truth, and to the Synod constitute, as formerly, for the Support of it. And if some were in Danger to turn aside, through Unacquaintedness with the State of the Affair, or through an undue Regard to the Names of some Men ; it was necessary to have others, under Divine Conduct, fixed, and resolutely cleaving to the Cause ; which, through the Divine Blessing, might in due Time be a Mean of gathering others who were scattered, and ready to wander further from the Banner of Truth.

In Answer to their *fifth Reason*, it is to be observed, that in the *Protest* read by the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Mair*, in his own Name, and in Name of the other Members of Synod joining him in it, the lawful Authority and Power of the Associate Synod is declared to be devolved upon, and to ly in a constitute Meeting ; *not only* of the Members of Synod who had opposed the Torrent of Defection introduced by the separating Brethren, *but also* of such *other* Members as should cleave unto them, in a Way of confessing what sinful Steps and Compliances they had fallen into upon that Occasion. So that if any of these who had been Members of the Associate Synod were excluded, it was because they *excluded themselves*, by burying the Cause of Truth, and their own Ministerial Powers along with it ; and by their Impenitency, persisting in this sinful and most offensive Course. And sufficient War-rant has been shown already, and full Proof given, that the Power and Authority of the Synod was *devolved* upon such Members of Synod, as were endeavouring to support and maintain the Cause of Truth, which the prevailing Party were attempting to

to overthrow, tho' they succeeded not in the Attempt, but their own Feet were caught in the Snare they had laid.

It is true, what they add, that the LORD JESUS gives no Authority for the *Destruction* of his Courts and Work: In vain therefore do they pretend, after they have been destroying his Work, to keep his Courts; his Work and his Courts being inseparable one from another. And they may learn from the *Sacred Oracles*, that they can have no *regular Access* to a Seat in his Courts, till the Scandal and Offence they have given be purged, for their attempting the *Destruction* of his Work and Courts too.

In Answer to their *Sixth Reason*; it may be remembered, that as to the Meeting of the Synod, *April 10th*, it has been proved and made good, that there was no *new Synod*, nor any *new Constitution*; and that it was not so much as a *new Meeting* of the Associate Synod, but *another Sederunt* of the Meeting of the Associate Synod which began *April 8th*: It was and is, therefore, the *Associate Synod*, to which Accessions were made, for a considerable Time bygone, by Ministers, and others. As to their Way of discovering their Spleen and bad Temper, in comparing the Associate Synod to Mount *Gerizim*; I shall only say, that this ill-natured Reflection, together with their whole visionary and imaginary Scheme of having *themselves* accounted to be the Synod, after they had essayed to bury the Constitution of the Synod, together with these Principles upon which, and for the Defence of which, the Associate Synod was originally constitute, — proceeds wholly upon a meer *begging of the Question*, and can therefore be of no better Effect, than to ensnare some unthinking People, that knew not the

the true State of the Affair.

They object, in their *seventh Reason*, that this Meeting was call'd *at the Time when, and in the Place where, the Associate Synod were sitting, regularly constituted in the Name of the glorious Head of the Church.* To which it is answered, that the Meeting of Synod, *April 10th*, was not called till *that precise Point of Time*, in which the prevailing Party had voted an *Allowance* for *Seceders*, to *abjure* and *renounce*, by Oath, the whole Cause of Truth, and the whole Testimony as among the Hands of the Associate Synod; and had done this in a Method so disorderly; as of itself undermined the Constitution of the Court: And it may well be constructed to be the most unparalleled Confidence, if not much worse, for Men to pretend that they remain'd *regularly constitute*, in the Name of the glorious Head of the Church, and that they acted in his infinite and holy Name, in such a *disorderly* Procedure, and such an awful *burying* of his Work, Cause and Testimony.

I shall only further add, upon this Head, that that Meeting, *April 9th* in the Afternoon, was *closed*, as the extraordinary Nature of the Case required: (tho' not with Prayer by the then Moderator, yet) by a *solemn Protest*, in the Name of all the Members of the Synod adhering to the Testimony and Cause of Christ, that the said Meeting ought not to be held a *due* and *lawfully constitute* Meeting of the associate Synod in *that Step: viz.* of such disorderly Procedure, burying the Cause and Testimony of Christ. And this Protest being well founded upon the Word of God, which declares *That we can do nothing against the Truth but for the Truth;* and that *we are to contend for the Faith;* *we are to hold fast that which we have, that no Man*

take our Crown: The Synod was therefore *regularly closed* in the Name of Christ, just as the separating Brethren were proceeding in the awful Work of attempting to bury the Testimony of Christ; but in Effect, only burying their own Name and Characters.

After which, the Question being put to vote, and carried to a *Resolution* in the affirmative, The Reverend Mr. *Thomas Mair*, late Moderator, *PROTESTED* in his own Name, and in Name of all the Members of Synod then adhering to the Cause and Testimony of Christ, that the said Members of Synod *ought*, in Duty to the Lord and his Heritage, to *take up and exercise* the Authority and Power of the associate Synod, lawfully and fully *devolved* upon them; and for that End, to meet the following Day, being *April 10th*, at Ten of the Clock in the Forenoon. And this *Protestation* being founded upon the Word of God, particularly the Scriptures above-cited, and many others, therefore the *Sederunt* of Synod which met *April 10th*, was thus called in the Name and Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was intimate in *as regular* a Manner, as the Circumstances of the Time could possibly admit.

The separating Brethren, in their *8th Reason* have the Confidence to tell us, that *no sinful Thing* was required of the Members of Synod by them. But it would have been a Thing *most sinful* and unlawful in itself, for the Members of Synod to have made themselves *Art and Part* in the most sinful Work they were carrying on, so much as by *Silence*, or not *withstanding* them to the Face, in the Manner in which they were directed to do. When we see a Thief, we are not to *consent with him*, no not by *Silence* or Connivance, *Psal. l. 18*. And greater Theft has never been recorded in sacred or prophane History, than for Men at once to *betray and give up*
with

with the whole Cause and Testimony of Christ, as among their Hands.

They altogether misrepresent Matter of Fact, when they pretend to tell us in this *Reason*, that the Separation was made, because the separating Brethren would not submit unto a *new Term* of Communion, that is, according to them the *Act* 1746, concerning the religious Clause of some Burgefs Oaths. But they may know, That however the *Act* 1746, was a *Term of Communion*, in the *same* Sense as *any other Act* of Synod which justly determines any open Practice to be openly sinful: Yet the associate Synod shewed all *Tenderness* to the protesting Brethren, and never made any the least Step towards driving Matters upon that Point: And they well know, that it proceeded from *themselves* that so much Noise was made about the *Act* 1746, being a Term of Communion. And the *Separation* which *they* talk of here, did never take Place, till *they*, the separating Brethren, had given up with the Cause, as has been shown above.

As to the 9th *Reason*, It has been answered already: For altho' the Synod *April* 8th was lawfully constitute, and likewise *April* 9th, until that awful Step was taken, against which the *second Protestation* was entred, by which it was declared and protested, That they were not a Meeting *duly constitute* in that Step; yet it will not follow, for the Reasons given, as above, that the *separating Brethren* could still be held or repute Members of the associate Synod lawfully constitute, after they had made that dreadful Step, in so attempting to bury the Testimony and Principles upon which the associate Synod was constitute;—and thus had denuded themselves of all their Ministerial Powers, as to any Title to a

present Exercise of them; and, therefore, all that follows in this *Reason*, stands in no Need of any further Consideration, but is fully answered as above.

It is altogether unnecessary to spend Time, in noticing what they advance to no Purpose, that nothing was done anent the *2d Vote* but what was agreeable to the *first*. For, tho' something very bad was indeed enacted in their *first Resolution*, as has been shown in the *Vindication*; yet it must be own'd, that their *2d Resolution* which they voted afterwards, and which so deeply affected the whole Cause, was properly a bad *Purpose* and *Design*, until it was executed and fulfilled in voting their *2d Resolution*: And all the World knows, there is a great Difference betwixt a bad *Purpose* and *Design*, and the actual *Execution* thereof. Thus, the *Protestation* does not declare the Meeting of the Synod *unlawful*, until *that very Point of Time* in which the separating Brethren were making it *unlawful*, as to themselves, by their sinful and astonishing Conduct, in burying the Cause and Testimony for Truth.

Altho' the Brother who entred the *2d Protestation*, never said or thought, that every unlawful Act of a Court lawfully constituted doth render that Court unlawful in its *Constitution*; yet no doubt both he and every considering Person will be of Opinion, that a Deed *generally renouncing* and *giving up* with the Principles and Testimony for Truth upon which the Court was constitute, and that in a Way of such *Disorder*, as took Place, must in the Nature of the Thing, be a *subverting* of the *Constitution* of the Court, with Respect unto the Persons involving themselves in a Conduct so sinful and disorderly, and a plain *debarring themselves* from any Seat or Place in such a Court,

Court, until their Scandal and Offence is regularly purged. After what has been advanced, it is hoped they will no more pretend, that it has not been shown them at *what Time* the Synod changed, and became of *lawful, unlawful*, in its *Constitution*.

In Answer to their 10th Reason, I remit the Reader to the Synod's *Acts and Proceedings*, and to the *Vindication*; where the *heavy Charges* laid against the separating Brethren, and upon which the Synod's Act proceeds, finding that they have *fallen* from all Right and Title unto the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven as to any *present actual Exercise* thereof, are fully *proven* and made good against them. They were therefore quite out in their Measures, in spreading the Synod's *Charge* against them, before the World, in such full Terms, when *each* Article of the Charge is proved against them: And when in the mean Time, in what they advance upon this their pretended *Reason*, they only betake themselves to the vain Shift, of calling the Articles of Charge made good against them by the Name of *railing Expressions*. And at this Rate, no doubt with great Ease, they may answer every Argument, how solid soever it may be, that shall be advanced against them.

In Answer to their 11th Reason, it may be noticed, that the separating Brethren quite misrepresent the State of the Question, when they pretend that the Members of Synod, by their Protestations against the Torrent of Defection introduced by them in the two Resolutions voted by them, made themselves directly and immediately *Parties*. They may easily see, that, in the second Protestation, the Members of Synod then adhering to the Cause and Testimony, *protested*, that that Meeting in which the prevailing Party were proceeding to the awful Work
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of burying the whole Testimony, was not, in *that Step* to be held and Repute a *due and lawfully Constituted* Meeting of the associate Synod. It has been shown, that in *that Step* the separating Brethren *unbinged* the Constitution, as to themselves, and as to any present Interest in or any Claim they could presently make unto a Seat in the said associate Synod: They had not, therefore, the least Ground to expect, that any *Reasons* of such a *Protestation* could possibly be given in *to them*, or that any *Answer* from *them* was to be waited for; in regard, that it was expressly declared in this *Protestation*, that when going on to the burying of the Cause and Testimony in their *2d Resolution*, they were by no Means, *In that Step*, a Meeting of the associate Synod *duely Constituted*: And thus, the separating Brethren, having, in the Nature of the Thing, buried their own Ministerial Powers, in their Attempt at burying the Cause of Truth; they could be no more held or reputed present actual Members of the associate Synod; intituled to have the Protestations subjected to their Judgment; but the Cause of the Protestations became the *publick Cause* in the Hands of the Synod, instead of being the *personal Cause* of some against the Synod.

It is evident from what has been formerly shown, that there was no *new Synod*, nor any *new Constitution* of the associate Synod, which met *April 10th*; and this being the *sole and only associate Synod*, they behoved of Right to be the *sole Judges*, as to the *Answers* to the Protest taken against the *Decision 1746* and as to all the sinful and unreasonable attacks which had been made upon the Testimony, in the Resolutions voted by the separating Brethren, or any other Way whatsoever. The Members of Synod were better directed, than to take such a
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weak and puerile Course, as the separating Brethren here wish for; that is, to have any Way owned or acknowledged them, as then actual Members of a Synod witnessing for the Cause of Truth. No, they took their leave of them fairly and candidly, when they were rushing on to that awful Work of burying the Cause of Truth: They stood under the Banner of their Protestations, in an Agreeableness to the Word, as has been shown above; keeping hold of the Cause of Truth, of the associate Synod Constitute for the Support of said Cause, and of the Constitution of the Synod,—in that Period of Time when the separating Brethren were attempting to bury the same, by voting their 2d Resolution: And by their *last Protestation*, read and pronounced by the Reverend Mr. Mair, last *Moderator* of the Synod, in his own Name and in Name of all the other Members of Synod then adhering to the Testimony, they did *cleave to* and *carried* with them the *whole Cause* and *Testimony*, as among the Hands of the witnessing Synod; together with its *Constitution* and *Holding*, its lawful *Authority* and *Power*, all which are *inseparable* from the Cause and Testimony itself. And thus the Associate Synod did meet and constitute with Prayer, upon the 10th of *April*, in the very *same* Manner as upon the 8th of *April*, or at any Time when the Associate Synod did meet, since their first Constitution.

Finally, In answer to their 12th Reason, they are challenged to give a clear and distinct Account how they can justify their Procedure, in defending *contradictory Oaths*, and in allowing an *Abjuration*, or a *Renunciation* by Oath, of the *whole Cause* and *Testimony* as among the Hands of the witnessing Synod; how they can justify this by the Scriptures of Truth, the *Confession* of Faith, and *Acts* of former General

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semblies. This is indeed the State of the Question, as to the separating Brethren. They have proven nothing whatsoever, by their *twelve* pretended *Reasons*, as is evident from what has been said. They have the Confidence, I acknowledge, to *beg the Question* all along; that is, to beg and intreat that every Body may be pleased to believe, that after the sinful Part they have acted, they are still, notwithstanding, the Associate Synod; and that they will be so good, as to take *their bare Word* for it, without the least Shadow of any Proof whatsoever: But until they attempt to prove the Question as I have justly stated it above, it is altogether unnecessary for me to say any Thing further, as to what follows, in their pretended *twelfth Reason*; as if the holy *Scriptures*, the *Confession* of Faith, and *Acts* of former General Assemblies, gave Countenance to their sinful, absurd, and irrational Conduct. It were very easy to shew, that every *Scripture* they have adduced, is utterly *perverted* and *abused* by them; and that every Thing else which is advanced by them, from the *Confession* of Faith, and *Acts* of Assembly, is quite beside the Purpose: But I shall rest in the general Hint I have given as above; in regard that I expect their Conduct in this and other particulars, in their pretended Act, will be more fully animadverted upon by another Hand.

Upon the whole, It has been shewn, that the Pretensions they make to any *remaining* Title or Right to the *present actual* Exercise of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, are vain and groundless. And it remains a certain Truth, as it has been proved in the *Vindication*, that the Sentence of the *Associate Synod*, FINDING, that the *Ministers* and *Elders* presently in a Way of separating from the said Synod, have themselves, by their Male-administration *fallen* from all Right and Title to the *present actual* Exercise of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, until they be sensible of the Sinfulness of their Conduct, acknowledge the same to the Glory of God, and return unto their Duty to him, — is a Sentence *warrantable* and well founded.

